



SPARC Open Access Newsletter 168

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Welcome to the SPARC Open Access Newsletter, issue #168

June 1, 2013

by Peter Suber

Read this issue online

<http://www.earlham.edu/~peters/fos/newsletter/06-01-13.htm>

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SOAN is published and sponsored by the Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition (SPARC).

<http://www.arl.org/sparc/>

Change at SOAN

The SPARC Open Access Newsletter is about to change. I wish I could tell you exactly how, but I can't. SPARC and I still trying to figure that out.

I launched the newsletter in March 2001 with the title, Free Online Scholarship Newsletter (FOSN). At the time I was a professor of philosophy at Earlham College, just starting a sabbatical. I wrote about an issue a week until September 2002, when I returned to full-time teaching. During the 02-03 academic year, I put the newsletter on ice, launched my blog as an alternative that I hoped would be lightweight, and resigned my teaching position to work full-time on OA. I revived the newsletter in July 2003 with the new title, SPARC Open Access Newsletter (SOAN), reflecting the new role of SPARC as its sponsor and publisher. I wrote regular monthly issues for eight more years, until September 2011. Then I had to scale back and make it quarterly, to find time to run the new Harvard Open Access Project. Now I have to scale back again after 12 years and 168 issues.

I'm scaling back this time because I'm about to start my new gig as the Director of Harvard's Office for Scholarly Communication.

<http://hvrld.me/12smCIO>

<http://cyber.law.harvard.edu/node/8322>

The newsletter's frequency may not decrease this time around, and may even increase. That's still up in the air. I'm the one scaling back, not the newsletter itself. I've been its solo author for 12 years, and that's what has to change. I need to give my new responsibilities the time they deserve. I don't need to stop writing, and don't plan to. But I do need to step back from the regular deadlines of SOAN, and that means changing SOAN as we know it.

Heather Joseph, SPARC's Executive Director, and I are thinking about what SOAN 2.0 might look like. We don't know yet, but this is a rare and welcome chance to rethink the whole operation, its format, frequency, authorship, and purpose. I may continue in some role, for example, on an editorial board or as an occasional contributor.

I loved writing the newsletter for the same reason that I can't continue writing it. It was regular, long-form analysis. It started closer to the short and sporadic end of the spectrum, but became regular and lengthy. I knew I could write shorter pieces, if I wanted, but over time I wanted to write longer, more reflective ones. That was a joy, even with immovable deadlines to qualify the joy. Unfortunately, I no longer have time for regular, long-form analysis. Fortunately, I'll still have time for some kinds of long-form writing, at least the kinds without recurring deadlines. As I find time, I'll write for journals, SOAN 2.0, another book, or some combination of these.

For short pieces, and alerts about longer ones, follow my blog.
<http://bit.ly/suber-posts>

There are several versions of the SOAN archive, and of course all are OA:

* The SPARC/ARL version of the archive contains all issues of FOSN and SOAN from March 28, 2001, to July 2, 2011. That's when SPARC changed its listserv software and moved to a Google Group.
<https://mx2.arl.org/Lists/SPARC-OANews/List.html>

* The Google Group version of the archive contains all issues of SOAN from August 2, 2011, to the present.
<https://groups.google.com/a/arl.org/group/sparc-oanews/topics>

* The Earlham College version of the archive contains all issues of FOSN and SOAN.
<http://www.earlham.edu/~peters/fos/newsletter/archive.htm>

* DASH, the Harvard institutional repository, also contains all issues of FOSN and SOAN, together with most of my other writings.
<http://bit.ly/dash-suber>

This short note isn't a good-bye. If I thought it were, it would be longer and sadder.

Five years ago in SOAN

* SOAN for April 2, 2008
<http://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:HUL.InstRepos:3716784>

One essay in that issue: "Implementing the new NIH policy"
http://dash.harvard.edu/bitstream/handle/1/3716784/suber_news120.html?sequence=5#nih

Excerpt: "The new OA mandate at the NIH will kick in for most grantees next week, on April 7...."

Another essay in that issue: "Three principles for university open access policies"
<http://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:HUL.InstRepos:4317659>

Excerpt: "[1] Universities should provide open access (OA) to their research output. [2] Universities should not limit the freedom of faculty to submit their work to the journals of their

choice. [3] Universities now pay most of the costs of peer review, through subscription fees and faculty salaries. They should continue to bear the costs of peer review, in order to assure its survival, while recognizing that the forms and venues of peer review are changing." [Most of the article consists of annotations to these three principles.]

* SOAN for May 2, 2008

<http://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:HUL.InstRepos:3716781>

The lead essay in that issue: "What we don't know about open access"

<http://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:HUL.InstRepos:4322575>

Excerpt: "If a mature movement is one with a literature so vast that only specialists can master it, then the OA movement has been mature for several years. But that only means that much is known about OA. Much is still unknown....Here's an informal list of research questions whose answers would usefully fill out our current knowledge. It's a personal list in the sense that it represents what I'd like to know myself to help me see the big picture, understand the devils in the details, and give better recommendations to researchers and institutions. If I were advising Ph.D. students looking for research topics, I'd hand them this list and hope they'd find something they could sink their teeth into....This list would be larger and better if it weren't just my own. Therefore, I'll soon deposit it in the Open Access Directory (OAD), the wiki that Robin Peek and I launched just this week. The basic idea behind the OAD is that a community can maintain a list far better than a single individual could maintain it alone. It may take a few days to set up the new list, but watch my blog for news that it's ready for community editing. Once it goes up, it will be as much yours as mine. Please add new entries, revise existing entries, and send the URL to grad students and other researchers looking for ways to deepen our understanding of OA...."

* SOAN for June 2, 2008

<http://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:HUL.InstRepos:3716777>

The lead essay in that issue: "Open access and the self-correction of knowledge"

<http://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:HUL.InstRepos:4391168>

Excerpt: "Here's an epistemological argument for OA. It's not particularly new or novel. In fact, I trace it back to some arguments by John Stuart Mill in 1859. Nor is it very subtle or complicated. But it's important in its own right and it's importantly different from the moral and pragmatic arguments for OA we see more often. The thesis in a nutshell is that OA facilitates the testing and validation of knowledge claims. OA enhances the process by which science is self-correcting. OA improves the reliability of inquiry....Science is fallible, but clearly that's not what makes it special. Science is special because it's self-correcting. It isn't self-correcting because individual scientists acknowledge their mistakes, accept correction, and change their minds. Sometimes they do and sometimes they don't. Science is self-correcting because scientists eventually correct the errors of other scientists, and find the evidence to persuade their colleagues to accept the correction, even if the new professional consensus takes more than a generation. In fact, it's precisely because individuals find it difficult to correct themselves, or precisely because they benefit from the perspectives of others, that we should employ means of correction that harness public scrutiny and open access...."

Ten years ago in SOAN

I suspended the newsletter for the 2002-2003 academic year, including June 2003. But here are excerpts from July and August 2003.

* SOAN for July 4, 2003

<http://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:HUL.InstRepos:3997160>

From the preface to that issue: "The Free Online Scholarship Newsletter [FOSN] has changed its name to the SPARC Open Access Newsletter [SOAN]. With this issue, it resumes regular publication. The new name reflects two welcome changes. First, "open access" is now widely accepted as the standard term for the barrier-free online availability of scientific and scholarly literature. My old term for this, "free online scholarship" or "FOS", is still widely recognized, but has been steadily eclipsed by "open access" since the launch of the Budapest Open Access Initiative in February 2002. I now use "open access" instead of "FOS" in my own writing and see it much more often in the writings of other researchers, journalists, editors, and publishers. I could continue to ride on the branding identity that "FOS" has built up, but I decided that it was time to use the same term that I was encouraging others to use. (For the same reason, I've changed the name of the FOS News blog to Open Access News.) The second welcome change is that SPARC is now publishing the newsletter. SPARC's support has enabled me to leave full-time teaching for full-time research and writing on behalf of open access. I'm very grateful...."

One essay in that issue: "Martin Sabo's Public Access to Science Act"

<http://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:HUL.InstRepos:4725009>

Excerpt: "PASA is the boldest and most direct legislative proposal ever submitted on behalf of open access. US Copyright law already holds that 'government works' are not subject to copyright. PASA extends this exemption to works that are 'substantially funded' by the federal government....Creative Commons has many good examples of licenses that authorize open access and yet stop short of transferring works into the public domain. Since there is no need to jettison copyright in order to achieve open access, there is no reason to lose the votes of those members of Congress who would be unwilling to jettison copyright....Putting works into the public domain and obtaining copyright holder consent to open access are not themselves open access. They are merely two ways to clear the legal path to open access. PASA could go further and require actual open access. It could require funded researchers to submit their work to open-access journals or deposit it in open-access archives....This would take us all the way to the goal, not just to one of its important preconditions...."

Another essay in that issue: "Saving the oodlehood and shebangity of the internet"

<http://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:HUL.InstRepos:4552009>

Excerpt: "[O]ne property [of the internet] above all others makes open access possible. It's the capacity to disseminate perfect copies of a digital file to a worldwide audience at virtually no cost....[N]otice that it's the very same property that makes spam and...mass infringement possible. I wish this property had a name. That would do a lot to advance the discussion of open access, spam, and mass infringement. In the absence of an accepted name for it, and for lack of a better term (like oodlehood? shebangity?) let me call it the 'prodigality' of the internet....If my keyboard had a key that sent a non-fatal electric shock to the sender of a piece of spam, then I confess: mine would be worn out. I'm ominously attracted to a direct, Skinnerian remedy that combines text and voltage. ('Thanks for the spam. Here are 100 volts just for you.') People who hate copyright infringement hate it even more than I hate spam. On June 19, Senator Orrin Hatch said in public what many no doubt think in private, that the music industry needs a method to destroy the computers of copyright infringers. If executives at the RIAA and MPAA had remote detonation keys on their keyboards, they would be worn out. You may not hate mass infringement, but you probably hate spam, and that's enough to put you on both sides of this problem. The prodigality of the net carries the potential for momentous good and the potential for momentous harm. Those who fight the harm have a bad track record at limiting themselves to the harm, and a proven tendency to fight the prodigality of the net itself even at the cost of momentous good....Fight to defend [the prodigality of the internet] and to

prevent remedial overreaching. Don't hastily blame only the defenders of indefensible intellectual property theories. All of us who hate spam are now implicated....Can we hate spam surgically? ...Will the dream of open access live only as long as the internet's prodigality is enduring, and die when terrorist viruses (let's call them Hatchlings) can be delivered to every desktop?"

* SOAN for August 4, 2003

<http://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:HUL.InstRepos:3997180>

The lead essay in that issue: "How should we define 'open access?'"

<http://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:HUL.InstRepos:4736589>

Excerpt: "How important is uniformity about the definition? There is already uniformity on the core concept: removing price and permission barriers. I don't sense any schismatic tendencies in the open-access movement like those that divided the open-source software movement. We don't disagree, for example, that preservation and deposit are important, merely on whether they define open access or enhance the value of works that might already be openly accessible. If the definitions ever differ in schismatic or confusing ways, then we may have to borrow the methods of our open-source colleagues to minimize the friction and confusion arising from those differences. But so far, I just see an evolving concept, healthy flux, some boundary-testing on the possible elements, and some differences of accent in discussing the agreed-upon elements. However, there are several reasons not to multiply the elements required by a definition. First, it's easier to make the case for a simple concept than a complicated one. And our concept really is simple, or it wouldn't have its present momentum or history of independent discovery. Second, with every addition to the concept, we risk schism, especially if one faction wants to deny that another faction is providing "real open access" or is entitled to use the term. Finally, the phrase is still fairly new (it was not common until the BOAI launched in February 2002) and it's vulnerable to dilution, stretching, misunderstanding, and redefinition...."

Coming this quarter

Here are some important OA-related events coming up in the next three months.

* OA-related conferences in June 2013

<http://oad.simmons.edu/oadwiki/2013#June>

* OA-related conferences in July 2013

<http://oad.simmons.edu/oadwiki/2013#July>

* OA-related conferences in August 2013

<http://oad.simmons.edu/oadwiki/2013#August>

* Other OA-related conferences

<http://oad.simmons.edu/oadwiki/Events>

Housekeeping

June 17, 2013: MIT Press will release its OA edition of my book, *_Open Access_* (June 2012).

<http://mitpress.mit.edu/books/open-access>

I'll release my own OA edition soon after. My edition will incorporate the updates and supplements, and grow as I add new ones. The updates and supplements are OA of course, and can be used with any edition of the book. Also watch the update page for future editions of the book itself, including the upcoming OA editions.

<http://bit.ly/oa-book>

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SPARC home page for the Open Access Newsletter and Open Access Forum

<http://www.arl.org/sparc/publications/soan>

SPARC Open Access Newsletter, archived back issues

<http://www.earlham.edu/~peters/fos/newsletter/archive.htm>

To subscribe or unsubscribe

<https://groups.google.com/a/arl.org/group/sparc-oanews/subscribe>

Open Access Overview

<http://www.earlham.edu/~peters/fos/overview.htm>

Open Access Tracking Project

http://oad.simmons.edu/oadwiki/OA_tracking_project

Open Access News blog (2002-2010)

<http://www.earlham.edu/~peters/fos/fosblog.html>

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My other writings on OA

<http://www.earlham.edu/~peters/fos/oawritings.htm>

Harvard Open Access Project

<http://cyber.law.harvard.edu/hoap>

Meet me on Google+

<http://bit.ly/suber-gplus>

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